

## A Model Platform for Conservative City Council Candidates

1. **Local Control.** Government functions should be located as close to the people governed as practical. This keeps government more human and less impersonal. The division of power between state, county and city governments also serves as a check on the misuse of power at any level.
2. **Public Safety.** Law enforcement should be rational, consistent and as voluntary as practical.
  - a. Recent calls to defund the police are to be rejected. Police in general deserve public support.
  - b. Appropriate police oversight and continuous improvement efforts are always needed, but such reforms must not be co-opted by political agendas.
  - c. The public has an equal responsibility to behave properly toward the police and each other.
3. **Special Interests.** There are many legitimate special interests including builders, homeowners, business, public employees and taxpayers. Not all interests and demands, however are legitimate.
  - a. Every interested individual and group has a right to be heard and make their case with regard to policy and decisions. Each group brings valuable information and perspective to decision makers.
  - b. Decisions must be made in terms of principle rather than in response to pressure. Accordingly:
    - i. Adequate notice and opportunity must be given for broad public input at open meetings.
    - ii. Decisions must be publicly justified in terms of principles.
    - iii. Conflicts of interest must be disclosed and decision makers must recuse when appropriate.
  - c. Attempts to attract tax paying businesses by means of special tax breaks and incentives are misguided. The effort should be to make the general business climate in terms of taxes, regulations, services and law enforcement more attractive to businesses in general than other cities.
4. **Development.** A legitimate tension exists between the right of property owners to modify or develop their property and the impact of such development on neighbors and on the city in general. The matter is made worse by state efforts to dictate land use decisions to cities.
  - a. Cities must fight hard to retain local control over land use decisions.
  - b. Zoning and land use rules must be based on clear principles applied without fear or favor.
    - i. Proposed developments should be approved if and only if they conform to principle based written rules.
    - ii. If conditions warrant an exception to a given rule, either in rejecting or approving a given request, the process for making the exception must provide adequate notice and opportunity for input and the rationale for the exception must be provided in writing.
5. **Homelessness.** Our approach to the growing problem of homelessness must be both compassionate to the homeless and fair to the tax-paying, law-abiding public. Vagrancy ceases to be a lifestyle choice when it adversely impacts others. In general, homeless individuals can be

divided into those down on their luck who wish to get back on their feet and those who choose a life of vagrancy. This latter group are overwhelmingly victims of mental illness or substance abuse. For these, our guiding principle must be “intervention, not enabling.”

- a. Adequate outreach programs for the willing to help them get back on their feet should be provided.
  - b. Those unwilling to cooperate with such programs who run afoul of legitimate loitering, camping or disturbing the peace laws should be arrested and given a choice between jail or an appropriate get-well program in a shelter.
  - c. Appropriate programs begin when entering the shelter as a condition of being in the housing rather than jail.
6. **Finances.** The finances of many cities are in poor shape for many reasons. Putting city finances on sound footing involves applying the following principles:
- a. First, the city should be an attractive place to conduct business and produce the attendant revenues. This means light taxes and regulation, adequate services, law and order.
  - b. Second, long term debt should not be used for current expenses.
  - c. Third, all costs should be fully funded and reflected in the current budget. Unfunded liabilities including pension obligations and deferred infrastructure maintenance must not be hidden in “off-budget” accounts. A problem must first be visible if it is to be addressed.
  - d. Costs associated with above market compensation for employees must be confronted in frank negotiations with employee unions, considering all of the following:
    - i. The likelihood many unsustainable pensions will not materialize if they can’t be funded.
    - ii. Outsourcing and reduction in forces.
    - iii. Federal Chapter 9 bankruptcy as the likely alternative.